

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3-5 are pending in the application. By this Amendment, claim 2 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer and claim 1 is amended.

Claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over the admitted prior art in view of either Montagne (U.S. Patent No. 3,763,911) or Japan 11-342705. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Montagne teaches a tire tread with protruding elements between adjacent ribs as shown in Figure 2. The object of this tire tread with protruding elements is to prevent undesirable furrow wear.

Japan 705 teaches a pneumatic radial tire that provides railway abrasion resistance of a second rib viewed from a shoulder side of the tread. As shown in Figure 3 of Japan 705, a slot is formed between a projection inside a groove with an inclined groove wall.

Claim 1 is directed to a pneumatic tire provided with a plurality of main grooves extending in a tire circumferential direction on a tread surface. Claim 1 recites that, with regard to a main groove having a groove width widened during inflation among the plurality of main grooves, a groove wall near a shoulder is inclined outward in a tire width direction toward a groove bottom, a thin rib protruding from the groove bottom along the groove wall near the shoulder is provided and a groove wall near the center is inclined outward in the tire width direction toward the groove bottom, thereby the main groove having the groove width widened during inflation extends along a single narrow groove formed between the groove wall near the shoulder and the thin rib.

It is respectfully submitted that none of the applied art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests the features of claim 1. Specifically, none of the applied art teaches or suggests a groove wall near a shoulder being inclined outward in a tire width direction toward a groove bottom, a thin rib protruding from the groove bottom along the groove wall near the shoulder being provided and a groove wall near the center being inclined outward in the tire width direction toward the groove bottom, thereby the main groove having the groove width widened during inflation extends along a single narrow groove formed between the groove wall near the shoulder and the thin rib. Thus, it is

respectfully submitted that one of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to combine the features of the applied art because such combination would not result in the claimed invention.

Furthermore, one of ordinary skill in the art would appreciate that when claimed structure is adopted to or for the main groove the (groove) width of which undergoes widening at the time of inflation of the tire, it is possible to effectively suppress generation of uneven wear otherwise likely in the vicinity of or about the main groove.

Thus, for the reasons set forth above, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is allowable over the applied art.

Claims 3 and 4 depend from claim 1 and include all of the features of claim 1. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claims are allowable at least for the reasons claim 1 is allowable as well as for the features they recite.

Claim 2 is canceled and therefore the rejection as applied to claim 2 is now moot.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over the admitted prior art in view of either Montagne or Japan 705 and further in view of Kukimoto et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,445,201). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Kukimoto discloses a straight configuration of a main groove with a rib positioned therein.

Claim 5 depends from claim 1 and includes all of the features of claim 1. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that claim 5 is allowable for the reasons claim 1 is allowable as well as for the features it recites.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of the application and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe anything further is desirable in order to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the telephone number listed below.

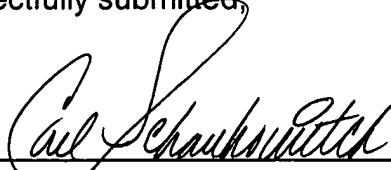
Should additional fees be necessary in connection with the filing of this paper or

if a Petition for Extension of Time is required for timely acceptance of the same, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 18-0013 for any such fees and Applicant(s) hereby petition for such extension of time.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: _____


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Enclosure(s): Appendix I (Marked-up Version of Amended Claims)

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APPENDIX I

MARKED-UP VERSION OF AMENDED CLAIMS

1. (Amended) A pneumatic tire provided with a plurality of main grooves extended in a tire circumferential direction on a tread surface, wherein, with regard to a main groove having a groove width widened during inflation among said plurality of main grooves, a groove wall near a shoulder is inclined outward in a tire width direction toward a groove bottom, ~~and a thin rib protruding from the groove bottom along the groove wall near the shoulder is provided,~~ and a groove wall near the center is inclined outward in the tire width direction toward the groove bottom, thereby said main groove having the groove width widened during inflation extends along a single narrow groove formed between the groove wall near the shoulder and the thin rib.